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News Release



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LANDOWNERS RECEIVE \$6.9 MILLION FOR ENDANGERED SPECIES CONSERVATION

Acting Assistant Interior Secretary Matt Hogan today announced grants totaling more than \$6.9 million to private landowners and groups in 35 states to undertake conservation projects on their land for endangered, threatened and other at-risk species. The Private Stewardship Grants Program will benefit species ranging from the Diana fritillary butterfly in Arkansas to the piping plover in Michigan.

Five projects in Oregon received more than \$325,000 in grants. The successful applicants were the Douglas Soil and Water Conservation District, Wallowa Resources, the Grande Ronde Model Watershed Foundation, The Nature Conservancy and Ducks Unlimited.

“The Private Stewardship Grants Program builds partnerships with private landowners to do what the federal government cannot do alone,” said Hogan. “This grant program empowers citizens to conserve imperiled species on private lands across the nation.”

Administered by the Department’s U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, each of the 80 grants awarded today require at least a 10 percent match in non-federal dollars or in-kind contributions.

Now in its fourth year, the Private Stewardship Grants Program provides federal grants on a competitive basis to individuals and groups engaged in voluntary conservation efforts on private lands that species protected by the Endangered Species Act, candidate species or other at-risk species. Under this program, private landowners as well as groups working with private landowners submit proposals directly to the Service for funding to support these efforts.

The Administration has requested funding of \$9.4 million for this program in 2007; last year, 72 grants totaling \$5.7 million were awarded to private individuals and groups in 38 states and one Territory. In the first three years of the program, 282 grants totaling more than \$22 million were awarded to private landowners across the country.

“We recognize that endangered species can only successfully recover if we work cooperatively with landowners and communities to promote voluntary stewardship on private lands,” said Service Director H. Dale Hall. “Private stewardship grants provide critical support to landowners who voluntarily conserve threatened and endangered species.”

The Private Stewardship Grant program is one of a variety of tools under the ESA that help landowners plan and implement projects to conserve species. Other cooperative measures under the ESA include Habitat Conservation Plans, Safe Harbor Agreements, and Candidate Conservation Agreements. These grants and cooperative agreements provide incentives to foster citizen participation in the stewardship of our nation's natural resources.

Among recipients of today's grants is Audubon of Kansas, which will use a grant of \$83,000 to work with four ranchers to conserve black-tailed prairie dogs that will provide sufficient habitat for restoration of the endangered black-footed ferret. In another example, Trout Unlimited in Lincoln County, Wyoming will receive \$120,000 to re-water a portion of Grade Creek to enable Bonneville cutthroat trout to migrate to their historic spawning grounds on Grade Creek.

Oregon Projects:

Elkhead Oak Woodland and Riparian Restoration – (application by Douglas Soil and Water Conservation District) – Douglas County, Oregon – (\$40,922) – This project will restore 175 acres of oak woodland, oak savannah, and riparian forest and 1.8 miles of stream habitat through the removal of invasive species such as English hawthorn, Scotch broom, and Himalayan blackberry. Species such as bald eagle, peregrine falcon, northwestern pond turtle, foothill yellow-legged frog, Oregon coast steelhead, coho salmon, and rough popcornflower will benefit as a result of the habitat restoration.

Habitat Restoration and Enhancement for At-Risk Species in Wallowa County, Oregon – (application by Wallowa Resources) – Wallowa County, Oregon – (\$53,600*) - This project will restore and enhance riparian and upland habitat. The Zumwalt Prairie Preserve Old Field Restoration and Hardwood Enhancement will benefit Snake River steelhead and Spalding's catchfly (both threatened species), as well as other species such as Ferruginous hawks and Columbian sharp-tailed grouse.

McDaniel II, Wallowa River Channel Reconstruction – (application by the Grande Ronde Model Watershed Foundation) – Wallowa County, Oregon – (\$59,233) – This cooperative project among the Bonneville Power Association, Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife, Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board, Natural Resources Conservation Service/Farm Services Administration, Grande Ronde Model Watershed, and the landowner will restore approximately 2,000 feet of the Wallowa River channel, replacing approximately 1,550 feet of channelized stream. Restoration efforts will benefit bull trout, Chinook salmon, steelhead, interior redband trout, and Pacific lamprey.

Threatened and Endangered Species Recovery Through Restoration of Prairies and Oak Woodlands in the Willamette Valley – (application by The Nature Conservancy) – Benton, Lane, Linn, and Marion Counties, Oregon – (\$112,717*) – Working with private landowners, The Nature Conservancy will implement four projects which will directly benefit Fender's blue butterfly, Kincaid's lupine, Taylor's checkerspot butterfly, Bradshaw's lomatium, Willamette Valley daisy, and other native plants. All projects seek to reduce or control invasive, non-native, or undesirable vegetation and replace it with native species associated with prairie, riparian forest, and creek habitats.

Klatskanine River Estuary Restoration – (application by Ducks Unlimited) – Clatsop County, Oregon – (\$59,250 (2003 funds)) –** This cooperative project among Natural Resources Conservation Service, Columbia Land Trust, Oregon Department of Forestry, and Ducks Unlimited will restore approximately 50 acres of tidally influenced forested wetland and 20 acres of bottomland along the Klatskanine River. Restored tidally influenced wetlands will serve as habitat for both juvenile and adult steelhead and Chinook, coho, and chum salmon as well as coastal cutthroat trout.

A complete list of the 2006 Private Stewardship Grant Program recipients can be found at:

http://www.fws.gov/endangered/grants/private_stewardship/index.html

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The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is the principal Federal agency responsible for conserving, protecting and enhancing fish, wildlife and plants and their habitats for the continuing benefit of the American people. The Service manages the 95-million- acre National Wildlife Refuge System, which encompasses 545 national wildlife refuges, thousands of small wetlands and other special management areas. It also operates 69 national fish hatcheries, 64 fishery resources offices, and 81 ecological services field stations. The agency enforces Federal wildlife laws, administers the Endangered Species Act, manages migratory bird populations, restores nationally significant fisheries, conserves and restores wildlife habitat such as wetlands, and helps foreign and Native American Tribal governments with their conservation efforts. It also oversees the Federal Assistance program, which distributes hundreds of millions of dollars in excise taxes on fishing and hunting equipment to State fish and wildlife agencies.

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